

Northern Edge Starts Today

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{audio}images/stories/mp3/080505.northern_edge.mp3{/audio}

Thousands of soldiers, sailors and Marines will be conducting war games over large swaths of Alaska and the Gulf during the next two weeks, as the annual Northern Edge exercise kicks off today (Monday).

Jeff Fee is the director of training, readiness and exercises for the Alaskan Command in Anchorage:

-- (Northern Edge 1 41 sec "… have to operate in the real world.")

The war games will operate out of Eielson Air Force Base in Fairbanks and Elmendorf Air Force Base in Anchorage, and include operations over land and sea:

-- (Northern Edge 2 31 sec "… that Gulf of Alaska sector.")

The U.S. Coast Guard from Kodiak to Sitka will also be involved:

-- (Northern Edge 3 17 sec "… works right in this particular exercise.")

Fee says there will be numerous Navy ships in the Gulf of Alaska serving as mock targets for fighter aircraft:

-- (Northern Edge 4 36 sec "… second week of the exercise.")

The war games will also feature virtual aircraft, with computers posing as warplanes, and operators as far away as Atlanta and Japan flying simulators in the same virtual air space as the real aircraft.

The Northern Edge operation will involve 5,000 personnel and wrap up at the end of next week.

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